

BOSTON SPLEEN

By Paul Lambrecht

He was a dirty stinking drunk, I mean a bad alcoholic, and probably not even thirty, at that.

He brought his longboard to disciplinary conferences with the dean.

He seemed like a poor student. A little dull behind the eyes, though disarmingly friendly. Gentle even.

I'd seen him lit-up before and back-slapping a little too early in the day at the bar he attended. How to make days like that last? They mostly just wore on, I've found.

He lived with a bartender in her apartment above the bar, so he had a social life. Lucky drunk devil. She was tall, lean, and looked like a Rachel, with a dark weave of hair. Her mouth was permanently set, prepared for unexpected terrible eventualities. Not pretty but not ugly. Not a bad pick-up for a drunkard flunking out of art school.

He came from dough, I guess. Perhaps it was because of this that he had issues at home. His stepmother hated him, and had before he'd ever even given her a reason. He chose not to share these details with his father, the sad bastard, who snuck drinks so as not to set a bad example at home for his vice-ridden son. They both drank for the same reason. Silent screaming rage. Every night, after a day spent in the company of spirit-smoldering internal voices shrieking out thirstily, they quelled the infernal pits of unrest in their souls. It definitely wasn't fun any longer. But it was deep, and the nightly ritual was not going away anytime soon. Any generation soon.

Night after night, year after year, slowly sinking to the bottom of their shallow ponds of sorrows.

Followed by dull aching days, the sun angrily accusing them from its ethereal plane. The outside world just a little too shiny and vivid, it made the eyes throb. Better

to stick with constant rain and clouds. Nothing lustering in his gaze except for the amber-filled glass, and the dull sheen of a 'Guinness' decal'ed mirror behind the bar.

Anaesthetized, numb, petrified, wild and uncivilized, he held court with the shadowy painted portraits of Irish literary luminaries, their creative lights tacked on to the canvases in the form of wavy pastel lines. Artistically transmogrified drunks. He smiled.

Drunken art. He decided to go out for a ride in the sun for fresh air. The noonsun beamed off the glass and brick of the opulent patriotic supermarket on the corner. He longboarded down the car-clogged avenue to the site of his last-ditch stab at redemption: the dilapidated art school. An old weathered freight elevator to a nihilistic avocation.

His run-down mind was reeling, his rage was parched, glowing like an orb in the pit of his abdomen, communicating with all the nearby taverns like a cell-phone tower of boozy lust.

Why couldn't he be a raging Irish arch-romantic artist-inebriate?

Why was his drinking so destructive, so sad? So upsetting to everyone, so stifling and flaccid as it

appeared to himself? Perhaps because he was so dull inside the eyes and his rage was so wild and elemental.

He would never be able to convince real artists of his worth. He couldn't even grift a free drink off them. So he longboarded back to the bar. The Red Sox game was on. His girlfriend unset her mouth as if spontaneously elated to see him for once.

Fenway Park. Now there was a work of art!

End.